

**MATTHEW 1:18-25**  
**DRAMATIC EVENTS IN AN OUT-OF-THE-WAY PLACE:**  
**A MODEL FOR GODLY MANHOOD**

“Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.’ All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

‘Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,  
and they shall call his name Immanuel’

(which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.”<sup>1</sup>

Having listened to a group of older men argue, a younger man once rebuked those elders,

“I am young in years,  
and you are aged;  
therefore I was timid and afraid  
to declare my opinion to you.  
I said, ‘Let days speak,  
and many years teach wisdom.’  
But it is the spirit in man,  
the breath of the Almighty, that makes him understand.  
It is not the old who are wise,  
nor the aged who understand what is right.”

[JOB 32:6-9]

Can we truly learn from the younger members of society? Is it possible that we have so muddied the waters of contemporary church culture that we need a fresh start? Speaking quite broadly, it seems that our culture is circling the drain, moving ever faster as we are drawn downward into the sewers of our broken world where there is little hope of recovery.

Throughout this past year, I have pondered the pending death of contemporary society. By every conceivable metric, we are a dying culture. The end cannot be long delayed. Our politicians are incapable of rising to the level of being statesmen. Our educators are social justice warriors intent on creating a bold new amoral world, and our children are the guinea pigs. The churches have become mausoleums filled with the bones of a glorious, powerful past.

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from **The Holy Bible: English Standard Version**. Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers, 2001. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

There was a time when the churches believed what was written in the Word. For far too many of the churches of this day, that has changed. A United Church minister has asked to be defrocked in protest of the firing of an atheist colleague. Imagine! An atheist openly serving as a minister of a mainline congregation is upset because she had to endure a hearing in which her views were deemed “extreme.” Now, a colleague, standing in solidarity with her, has asked that she be defrocked if her sister minister is no longer allowed to pastor a congregation!<sup>2</sup>

The atheist minister of this United Church is supported by more than two dozen current and former ministers who wrote, in a letter to the church’s moderator, “To remove her on the grounds of her beliefs would not only ignore and offend her very obviously effective leadership, it would offend our tradition of heterodoxy and inclusion, and send a chilling message to our progressive colleagues all across the church.”<sup>3</sup>

I wish I could tell you that this situation only exists among the a few liturgical churches. Unfortunately, there are many supposedly evangelical congregations that have long since departed the Faith that was once delivered to the saints. Among many denominations, ministers have become practical atheists, if not openly espousing such error. An untaught laity, ignorant of the Word of God and sated with the philosophies of this dying world are content to leave running the church to the experts and they imagine they are pleasing to God.

The family has been redefined in our nation. As long ago as 1999, the Supreme Court of Canada altered the way family is to be defined. According to these robed tyrants, “spouse” must include members of the same sex.<sup>4</sup> The seed was sown and the poisonous fruit is coming to full bloom. Ontario has recently passed Bill 28, the controversial “All Families Are Equal Act.” This law legally redefines “mother” and “father” as “parent” to accommodate homosexual couples who conceive children through reproductive means. The Act gets rid of “mother” and “father” in family law to allow for a purely contractual relationship between up to four adult parents, and the children that are legally identified as theirs, according to Dr. Scott Masson. Dr. Masson contends that this new legal “family” can only exist if the traditional, natural family unit is destroyed.<sup>5</sup> Because by law the natural bond is broken, leaving only a contractual relationship, it will be easier for the state to seize children in this brave new world.

If we fail to train our children to be godly men and women, there is little hope that society can survive. Even among the churches, we are treating family and righteousness in marriage as optional. Our sons are growing to manhood with woefully distorted views of manhood and our daughters are uncertain how a godly woman looks or acts. Our children are inundated with false teaching of what godliness is. Children are trained twenty-four/seven by the entertainment industry through television, radio, the Internet and literature that girls should be promiscuous or they won’t be liked and that boys should be disrespectful, ribald and sexually aggressive in order to be popular.

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<sup>2</sup> Colin Perkel, “United Church minister asks to be defrocked over review of atheist colleague,” October 27, 2016, Yorkton This Week, <http://www.yorktonthisweek.com/united-church-minister-asks-to-be-defrocked-over-review-of-atheist-colleague-1.2377010>, accessed 3 December 2016

<sup>3</sup> Colin Perkel, “Minister asks to be defrocked over treatment of atheist colleague,” October 27, 2016, The Globe and Mail, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/minister-asks-to-be-defrocked-over-review-of-atheist-colleague/article32547086/>, accessed 3 December 2016

<sup>4</sup> See “Supreme Court ruling redefines family,” CBC News, May 20, 1999, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/supreme-court-ruling-redefines-family-1.192688>, accessed 3 December 2016

<sup>5</sup> Lianne Laurence, “Ontario unanimously passes radical LGBT bill redefining parent-child relationship,” November 29, 2016, <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/breaking-ontario-unanimously-passes-radical-lgbt-bill-redefining-parent-child>, accessed 3 December 2016

Being “liked” is of greater importance to our youth than is being godly. Christian moms and dads don’t need to tell their children to be godly—Christian moms and dads need to show their children how to be godly! We need to teach our children through a godly example that characteristics such as purity, goodness, courage, integrity and self-control must be cultivated if they will honour God. These qualities must be exemplified in the lives of fathers and mothers, and then reproduced in the lives of children. Parents must insist that their children be godly.

I have a brief time to speak of raising godly men. A generation has been raised up that is dying for models of godly men. It is not too late to change the death spiral for your family—if you act now. I point you to Joseph as an example of one such godly man. I know that Joseph was a child by our standards; he likely was not more than fourteen years of age when we meet him in Matthew’s Gospel. However, he is presented as a righteous man, worthy of emulation by any man wanting to honour God and to provide a sound example for his own children.

Joseph gets little respect when churches present the biblical account of the Saviour’s birth. The child chosen to portray Joseph in the Christmas play seldom has to learn any lines—he just needs to be there, silent and perhaps even somewhat confused at why he is there. Nevertheless, Joseph is essential to the Christmas story. Had there been no Joseph, there would be no birth of the Christ as we know it. Joseph may seem to be a minor player in the Christmas story; however, he is anything but minor as the account is presented by Matthew.

**JOSEPH WAS JUST** — “Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.”

Young men need a model for godly manhood. Young men are often uncertain what a godly man looks like; young women are uncertain what to look for in a godly man. Trained by a broken culture to expect that love is a warm, fuzzy feeling, our culture has failed to grasp that love is an act—love is commitment to one another. Our youth live in a society in which godly models are often rare, if available at all. By godly models, I infer that a man should be considerate and strong. He should use his strength to protect the vulnerable, to hold tyrants in check and to encourage the weak. A godly man must realise that women—all women—are to be held in esteem, honoured as created to make man complete; he must recognise that together, man and women are meant to strengthen one another to the glory of God.

Pornography is ubiquitous—it is everywhere and it is vile. It debases our daughters and our wives and it destroys a man’s ability to think rationally, to be loving or to be creative. Pornography, like drugs and alcohol, is at first repulsive; but it beckons the unwary to linger just a little longer. Our children must be trapped in order for the pornographer to continue to ply his filthy trade; thus, this evil is shoved into the face of our children through the most innocuous sounding sites listed on Google, Yahoo or Bing. A godly man must not succumb to his base inclinations; rather, he must seek to live a holy, godly life in the strength of his manhood. In a world in which purity is ridiculed, it takes courage to stand against the tide, refusing to be swept along by emotions that will soon destroy what character you have.

The events encountered in life, whether appearing as calamities or appearing as blessings, should be seen as opportunities to reveal who we are. Rather than being mere events over which we have no control, events should be seen as opportunities—especially as opportunities to glorify God. What events were taking place about Joseph at this particular time in his life? The first thing of which we are informed is that he was pledged to marry Mary.

Joseph and Mary were legally committed to marry one another. They had not, like so many couples in this day, set up an arrangement as roommates with benefits—they sought to honour God. And though the Scripture had not yet been written, they practised the truth proclaimed by an unknown author who wrote, “Let marriage be held in honour among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled.” They maintained their purity because they recognised that “God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous” [HEBREWS 13:4].

The concept of betrothal sounds quaint in a day when people tolerate, and even promote, sexual licence. At the time described in the text, that day almost two thousand years ago, a couple would covenant to be married.<sup>6</sup> The marriage covenant actually was an alliance between two families—an alliance cemented through their children. The father of the young man would seek a bride for him, and the parents of the young woman would be alert for a suitable husband for their daughter. When the families had spoken of the possibility of marriage, the young man, usually about thirteen or fourteen years of age, would then give gifts to the young woman, who might be as young as twelve years of age. When she accepted the gifts, the couple formed a marriage covenant. The exchange of gifts sealed the covenant.

After sealing the covenant, the young couple would enter into the state of betrothal. Betrothal had the legal status of a marriage [cf. DEUTERONOMY 28:30; 2 SAMUEL 3:14]. Infidelity after betrothal was a very serious matter. Under the Mosaic Law, anyone violating a betrothed virgin was to be stoned. The wording preserved in the Law demonstrates that a betrothed woman was considered to be a wife. “If there is a betrothed virgin, and a man meets her in the city and lies with her, then you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city, and you shall stone them to death with stones, the young woman because she did not cry for help though she was in the city, and the man because he violated his neighbor’s wife. So, you shall purge the evil from your midst” [DEUTERONOMY 22:23, 24].

Despite what has already been stated, there nevertheless was a distinction between a woman who was betrothed and a wife, though the distinction was very fine. A man who was betrothed was already regarded by the bride’s family as a son-in-law at the time of the betrothal [see GENESIS 19:14]. Betrothal normally lasted for one year; in contradistinction to modern sexual ethics, the betrothed couple, though holding a legal status as a husband and wife, refrained from sexual intercourse until marriage. Purity was vital. A woman was to reserve herself for her husband; and a man was to reserve himself for his wife. How different from this day. And how much better for the family!

In light of the extended introduction for this message, I must provide another aspect of Jewish marriage custom that is pertinent to the message, though tangentially so. Educators and social justice warriors argue that youth are incapable of controlling their sexual urges. I think more highly of youth, despite the constant flood of sexually provocative materials that assault youth today. The custom in that day was that a husband and wife would have no sexual relations after the birth of a child until that child was weaned. Weaning normally took place at three years of age. Thus, when we read that Joseph “knew her not until she had given birth to a son” [MATTHEW 1:25], the couple may have been chaste as long as three and one-half years!

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<sup>6</sup> The discussion of “betrothal” based on information received from Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, **Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible** (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI 1988), 1408–1409; also see Ronald F. Youngblood, F. F. Bruce, and R. K. Harrison, Thomas Nelson Publishers, eds., **Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary** (Thomas Nelson, Inc., Nashville, TN 1995); Martin H. Manser, **Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies** (Martin Manser, London 2009); Lawson G. Hatfield, “Betrothal,” ed. Chad Brand et al., **Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary** (Holman Bible Publishers, Nashville, TN 2003) 199–200

Before the marriage was consummated, before the betrothal period was ended, Mary conceived a child. This was not just any child; this was the Son of God. Luke, focused on Mary and her experience, gives us somewhat more detail concerning Mary and her child than does Matthew. Luke writes, “In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin’s name was Mary. And he came to her and said, ‘Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!’ But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.’

“And Mary said to the angel, ‘How will this be, since I am a virgin?’

“And the angel answered her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore, the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.’ And Mary said, ‘Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.’ And the angel departed from her” [LUKE 1:26-38].

Why should it be thought impossible for the Lord God to cause a virgin to bear His Son? If God can speak a universe into existence, if the Son of God can give life to the dead by speaking a word and if He can cause withered hands to be whole or blinded eyes to see or deaf ears to hear, why would it be thought beyond His power to cause the virgin to bear His Son into the world? It is only unbelief of the basest sort that causes modern people to imagine that they can coerce God into their poorly defined little box, compelling Him to act as they prescribe and only according to their time-schedule. Christ Jesus was born of a virgin. However, though the angel had told Mary what was to happen before she conceived, Joseph had not been informed. What a shock, then, when Joseph discovered that Mary was with child. Whether Mary told him or whether he saw that she was pregnant, we are not told.

Writing under inspiration of the Spirit of God, Levi says that Joseph was “a just man.” We see some of his goodness in his response to Mary’s condition. While God does not inform us of Joseph’s emotional state when he learned of Mary’s pregnancy, it appears obvious from his lack of choler and the absence of rage that he was in full control of his emotions. We train our youth today to get in touch with their feelings. Consequently, people appear more prone to have an emotional response to the challenges faced than to have a reasoned response.

We will do well to teach our youth,

“Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty,  
and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.”

[PROVERBS 16:32].

Another proverb that is worthy of memorising and applying to life teaches us,

“A man without self-control  
is like a city broken into and left without walls.”

[PROVERBS 25:28].

Strictly speaking, the Pharisees were careful to make an appearance of “righteousness.” Jesus accused the Pharisees and their scribes, “Outwardly [you] appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness” [MATTHEW 23:28]. They were scrupulous in maintaining the meticulous requirements of the Law. Paul, looking back to the days when he was a proud Pharisee, wrote of himself, “As to righteousness under the law, [I was] blameless” [PHILIPPIANS 3:6]. He created his own righteousness, but he was not righteous.

The Apostle continues in his Letter to the congregation in Philippi by confessing, “Whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death” [PHILIPPIANS 3:7-10],

Thus, we recognise a strict sense in which one is declared righteous in Christ—this is our goal in proclaiming the Good News of salvation in Christ. We also recognise there is a popular sense in which one is a “good” person. What I am getting at is that there is a strict sense in which we can speak of someone as “just,” and there is the popular sense in which we may speak of someone as “just.” No one is “just” except Christ, though we are made just in Him. We are not righteous; but we are declared righteous when we come to Christ in faith.

I recall hearing a man who had been accused of a serious crime plead on one occasion, “Make me righteous!” He wanted the authorities to absolve him of wrong-doing, he wanted them to publicly admit that he had committed no crime, that he was innocent. That plea captures the concept evinced in Joseph’s life—his actions were innocent before God, he endeavoured to be blameless in the manner in which he lived out his life. This was not an innocence that could be described as uncaring what others thought—his was an innocence that spoke of a life that sought to know the will of God and endeavoured to do that will. In this, he was a true descendant of Abel whom Jesus called “righteous” [see MATTHEW 23:35].

The text declares Joseph to have been a just man. The word translated “just” is often translated “righteous.” We know there is outward righteousness and there is true righteousness. The term “just,” or “righteous,” is used in the Gospels to speak of a pious individual—one who is religious. At other times, the same word speaks of someone who lived a “good” life. As you can see, the word may seem somewhat nebulous, especially when used in the popular sense. However, as Matthew writes the Gospel that bears his name, he ensures that we understand what is meant when he says Joseph was “a just man.”

The evidence that Joseph was “a just man” is that he was unwilling to put Mary to shame. He did not want to turn her over to the authorities, either to embarrass her or to see her executed as an adulterer. His plan was to put her away privately, to quietly give her a bill of divorce so that she and her child would remain in her parents’ house. This would likely mean that she would never be married, but it would spare her from either public embarrassment or death.

I read that “he resolved to divorce her quietly.” He had pondered the proper course of action; now, he would act deliberately. This was no mere desire driven by his feelings; Joseph was acting purposefully to do what was right. He sought to do what was right in the sight of God and not just have her killed without a second thought. Understand that if Joseph had carried out his plan, it would have meant that he would remain unmarried for at least an extended period.

I am impressed by the maturity Joseph exhibited. He was deliberate; he was thoughtful. He displayed more maturity than many men in middle age. He was manly. We would do well to make the effort to be as self-possessed as was Joseph. Our children need to see such goodness from us as men.

Perhaps it dilutes the concept of being “good” too much to say that Joseph was good; nevertheless, the Bible speaks of him as “just.” We saw that in the popular parlance it spoke of one who allows his goodness to guide his actions. Even Jesus, when addressed as “good,” pushed back to ensure that the young man calling Him “good” understood what he had just said. Refresh your memory by looking at the exchange once more. “As [Jesus] was setting out on His journey, a man ran up and knelt before Him and asked Him, ‘Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone’” [MARK 10:17, 18].

Goodness must be more than merely external—it must flow from our inner being. Of course, goodness is the sixth Fruit of the Spirit [see GALATIANS 5:22]. As such, we should expect Christian men to be good; and we should anticipate that we train our children to turn to Christ early in life knowing that as the Spirit of God works in them they will be good people.

**JOSEPH WAS CONSIDERATE** — “Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.”

I intend to invest only a brief time on this point. It is not that I believe the point to be unimportant, but that it should be self-evident. I don’t mean to imply that Joseph was a sensitive, metrosexual guy in the sense people think of “sensitive” today; I mean he was considerate—he was compassionate. It would be fair to say that Joseph was gentle in his interaction with others, especially with Mary who was to be his wife. Joseph saw his strength as opportunity to shield others. He saw his manliness as responsibility to be gentle. Strict application of Jewish law demanded that Mary be exposed so that she could be stoned! However, Joseph sought to find a way to shield her from such a brutal sentence while doing what was good. Joseph was a religious man, and thus he was not able to carry out the marriage contract. However, he was a kindly man, unwilling to see Mary exposed to ridicule and possibly even death.

This point is perhaps more important in this day because of the constant emphasis on promoting one’s self. “You deserve a break,” we are told. We are encouraged through ads and through entertainment to put our own interests ahead of the interests of others. That is not how we are taught to act according to the Word of God, however. When Paul determined to send Timothy to the Philippian Church, he commended him to the congregation, “I have no one like him, who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. For they all seek their own interests” [PHILIPPIANS 2:20, 21a].

A godly man puts the welfare of others before himself. This is especially true of a Christian husband—his wife and his children will have precedence over his own interests. This is what we are taught in the Word; and it is the responsibility of each man to love his wife selflessly. “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands, should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself” [EPHESIANS 5:25-28].

It is not only Paul who teaches this; Peter, likewise, instructs men to love their wives. “Husbands, in the same way, treat your wives with consideration as the weaker partners and show them honor as fellow heirs of the grace of life. In this way, nothing will hinder your prayers” [1 PETER 3:7, THE NET BIBLE]. Mark down the concept—treat your wives with consideration.

Let me read that verse from another contemporary translation in order to make the point more powerfully. “Be good husbands to your wives. Honor them, delight in them. As women, they lack some of your advantages. But in the new life of God’s grace, you’re equals. Treat your wives, then, as equals so your prayers don’t run aground” [1 PETER 3:7, THE MESSAGE]. Could this account for some of the lack of power in our lives, men? Do we need to get a handle on being considerate?

**JOSEPH WAS OBEDIENT** — “As [Joseph] considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.’ All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

‘Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,  
and they shall call his name Immanuel’

(which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.”

When God’s messenger spoke, Joseph obeyed. The words are disarmingly simple, and equally powerful: “When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him.” Perhaps you question whether this could be true; perhaps you argue that you’ve never spoken with an angel. Are you quite certain about that? We are taught in the Word that “Some have entertained angels unawares” [HEBREWS 13:2]. Perhaps you will argue that if an angel were to speak to you, you would obey him.

May I remind you that we have something more certain than the word of an angel! Peter has written, “We possess the prophetic word as an altogether reliable thing. You do well if you pay attention to this as you would to a light shining in a murky place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts” [2 PETER 1:19, THE NET BIBLE].

As you read the Bible, you are reading God’s very Word. His Spirit speaks with you through this Word. If you are not reading the Word, then you are not hearing the Spirit speak. The problem, then, is not that you cannot know the will of God—the problem is that you do not know the will of God because you are not listening for the voice of the Spirit of God. Why are so many men disobedient? It is because they choose to ignore the means by which God has spoken to us and by which He now speaks with us.

Why are so many men powerless in the face of evil? Is it not because they are ignorant of the will of God? Why are so many men unable to resist the temptations that are flung at us each day? It is because we do not read the Word; thus, we are unaware of God’s provision to keep us from evil. Why do so many men fail to pray for their children and watch helplessly as their children desert the Faith and cease to serve the King of kings? It is because we have ignored time alone with God to hear His voice speaking through the Word He has given!



I'm pleading with men to be godly. I'm pleading with men to discover the will of God and then do what God commands. It is as simple as making oneself familiar with the Word of God. This present generation of men are distinguished for knowing all the statistics of the stars of the hockey world; yet, these same men are ignorant of the will of God. We can recite who danced a particular dance on Dancing with the Stars; yet, we have never walked with the Master. We recite the disgusting lyrics to the latest rap hit; yet, we are unable to recite the Ten Commandments. We know which country star is appearing next at the Agri Centre; but we are unaware of the signs of the times. If we do not change our lives, we will surely watch our children follow in our footsteps. Then, we will cry out as did one family some years ago, when their child turned away from the Faith, "The church failed us! Why didn't you do something?" May God give me courage to say to you, if you make such a charge, just as I said to that family, "Who is the father? Who is the mother? Did you pray with your child? Did you read the Word with your child? Did you insist that your child would attend the services of the church with you? If you did not do these things, then you are responsible for your child turning from the Faith."

Christian men will do well to emulate Joseph. Christian fathers must teach our sons to be manly—and manliness entails becoming just in our life, compassionate, especially toward the vulnerable, and Christian father must teach their sons to be obedient to the Lord our God. Christian mothers bear responsibility in this realm to hold their sons accountable to be just and compassionate and obedient. Every parent under the sound of my voice should seek out godly men to point out to their sons, encouraging them to model their lives after such men. Christian men should aspire to be such godly individuals.

We live in a day in which manhood has been terribly distorted. Too often boys are taught to be brutes—somehow, they imagine that crude language makes them manly; it only makes them appear ignorant and incapable of logical thought! Tragically, girls are becoming even worse than the boys, no doubt because they no godly man is available to demonstrate what they should seek in a husband. I cannot speak to the entire world; I do speak to you who hear me this day. Determine that you will be a godly man, emulating Joseph when confronted with a crisis in his life. May God give us wisdom. Amen.